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ABSTRACT

This report looks at the classroom lives of teachers, examining ways in which teachers influence and are influenced by others and impediments to their effectiveness in decision making, lesson planning, and other instructional responsibilities. Conditions and characteristics particular to public school teachers in New York City are considered. Six recommendations emphasizing the need for overall salary improvement for teachers, financial support from public and private resources, creative involvement from colleges and universities, supportive school leadership, a mentor teacher program, and an assessment of professional standards are presented. Appendices offer a list of national educational reform reports, 1982-84 and a summary of seminar discussions. (CB)

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THE CLASSROOM LIVES OF TEACHERS: ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MEDARP Report

Metropolitan
Educational Development
and Research Project

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MEDARP SEMINAR SERIES
Fall, 1984

THE CLASSROOM LIVES OF TEACHERS: ISSUES, OBSERVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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SUMMARY

For the benefit of the 41 million children in the public schools today, teachers must possess a sense of autonomy in the classroom. This need for empowering teachers and giving recognition to their professional integrity has been established through the many recent national reports and school studies. Teachers powerfully affect, and are powerfully affected by, their students. Evidence is presented which supports the interactive relationship between teachers, students, and curriculum materials. The power to make decisions about curriculum, teaching activities, and student learning must reside with teachers in order for the profession to thrive.

In New York City, about two-thirds of the teachers are female. The same proportion are proud to be teachers and are committed to teaching. Likewise, about the same proportion of parents expressed support for the public schools of the city. Serious questions with respect to the role of the media's presentation of education are raised, along with questions of job satisfaction in teaching and other careers. Aspects of teacher attitudes and autonomy are crucial to understanding the facilitating and inhibiting factors involved in job satisfaction.

Support for teacher decision-making power resides in the structure of the school. It is suggested that confidence in teachers as decision makers may be hindered by cultural expectations. The top of the school hierarchy is predominantly male; the majority of the teachers are female. The former are expected to be instrumental; the latter nurturing and expressive. In light of more than a decade of change in societal attitudes, it is time to restructure the situation and to enhance active teacher decision making.

Six recommendations emphasize the need for overall salary improvement for teachers, financial support from public and private resources, creative involvement from colleges and universities, supportive school leadership, a mentor teacher program, and an assessment of professional standards. The paper gives voice to the teachers who want to make a difference in the lives of children and who need support to be heard.

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INTRODUCTION

Every day 41 million girls and boys in the United States between the ages of 5 and 18 years share one thing in common -- classroom experiences. In one school year children spend over 1,000 hours in classrooms with their teachers. The teacher is at the center of 1,000 daily interpersonal exchanges in the classroom, and the teacher's beliefs and instructional decisions will significantly affect the learning, performance, and attitudes of the students in that classroom. Thus, the lives of 41 million young individuals in this country are keenly influenced by teachers, and this responsibility makes teaching the most significant and challenging, though occasionally frustrating, career.

Just as children are part of a classroom, teachers are part of a school, and schools are reflections of the society. The quality of the schools depends largely on the teachers; teachers' knowledge, energy, organization, and sensitivity determine in large measure how well the children learn and how the school is judged. The school as an organization is made up of individuals, and it is these individuals whose decisions and actions determine the school's effectiveness. Culbertson (1983) suggests that individuals and groups intervene to "change and shape the on-going activities in which they participate" (p. 21), and in schools these individuals and groups are the teachers and administrators.

The position to be expounded in this paper is that day in and day out teachers can, indeed must, be the active and effective decision makers. It is through their actions that the institution of the school will most often be reflected. Unfortunately, forces exist which inhibit or constrain

teachers' decision-making power. Global indictments of teachers, schools, and education address poorly the individual impact of schooling on the lives of children. It may be more useful to examine the classroom lives of teachers and to make recommendations which support their strength and autonomy.

Without doubt, schools are organized and structured in a similar way; teachers operate in the cellular classroom and are perceived in a normative fashion like so many snowflakes in a storm, without individuality and singularity. But for all the similarity of situation and circumstance, teachers each day make thousands of individual decisions about a myriad of issues, including students, curriculum, goals, techniques, activities, and rewards. Considered overall, these decisions affect individual and group learning, attitudes, and perceptions about the whole school. A major concern is how the profession of teaching can attract and retain teachers who will be facilitators of learning for all students through wise and sensitive decisions.

> "Teaching is like gardening. You put in a seed, but you don't walk away from it. Not if you expect something to grow."

THE CALL FOR IMPROVEMENT

Periodically, society assesses its educational system in its pursuit of excellence and determines that it is needy. (See Ravitch's The Troubled Crusade: American Education 1945-80.) In most instances, the needs assessments have not recognized the enormous societal changes -- economic, social, legal, and political -- that would have to take place in order to change the schools. Unfortunately too, the necessary advocacy of teachers and parents as change agents is not sufficiently recognized. The heart of the education story is told in individual classrooms with individual students and individual teachers. Yet, "reformers" from the past (Conant, 1957; Silberman, 1970) and in the present (see Appendix A, Studies of American Education, 1980's) hail from outside the classroom and rarely from within. Finally, in recent studies, there is little recognition of the already launched efforts to improve educational quality for all students.

In Education Under Study (1983), Butler and Griesemer examine the critique and recommendations in eight of the recent reports in several areas: 1) school organization and management; 2) curriculum; 3) students and learning; 4) quality and equality; 5) teachers and teaching; 6) post-secondary education; 7) leadership: local, state, and federal roles; and 8) research. These reports recommend with varying emphasis, improving the teaching environment, providing teacher incentives, addressing the shortage of math and science teachers, and teacher training. They suggest that good teaching is inhibited by environmental circumstances, that teachers are not respected, and that "the organizational structure in which the classroom teacher now operates restricts independence and autonomy" (Twentieth Cen-

tury Fund Task Force, p. 9). Sizer argues that "good teachers value their autonomy...If they are denied autonomy, they do mediocre work -- or leave teaching" (1983, p. 683).

The issue of teacher autonomy is central to a discussion of attracting and retaining good teachers. Several of the reports recommend merit pay for demonstrated teaching excellence and a master teaching program to identify and reward exceptional teachers. Additional recommendations call for higher standards for entry-level teachers, career ladders within the profession, grants, loans, and teacher recognition awards.

Across the board salary improvement for beginning teachers and greater salary increments over time are also suggested. In 1982-83, the average entry salary for a teacher with a B.A. degree was $12,769; with 15 years of experience the average teacher's salary was $25,000 (Feistritzer, 1983, pp. 73 and 75). Recommendations for state and federal forgiveness loans for college students are advocated especially to attract math and science teachers where a shortage already exists in 43 states.

Teacher education curriculum is addressed in The Paideia Proposal and in A Place Called School with recommendations that those training to be teachers should be knowledgeable about their discipline and broadly exposed to behavioral and humanistic studies. Botstein (1983) proposes that schools and departments of education should be disbanded. There are many variations in teacher training experiences and courses, and much further study is warranted to ascertain the kinds of teacher education programs that make a difference for effective teaching. Recommendations for singularly oriented teacher training limit the possibilities for improvement. The appropriateness of a singular competency test to measure

teacher knowledge and effectiveness also warrants scrutiny.

In general, most of the current studies have not taken into account the already launched efforts by many school systems to improve the quality of education. An indication of some of these efforts is summarized by Walton (1983): 53 percent of the nation's school districts have already increased credits in core subjects for graduation and 69 percent have programs to improve attendance and decrease the over 30 percent high school drop-out rate. Already, 20 states have increased teacher certification requirements and 33 have incentive programs to attract math and science teachers.

In the New York area, Computerlink is used by teachers to identify the resources of 1,700 college faculty, and Teacher Centers provide resources, materials, and ideas for improving instruction. In New York City, the Exxon Education Foundation has since 1979 funded Impact II, supporting the dissemination of over 339 teacher-developed instructional programs which involve projects from art to social studies. Similar efforts are taking place in every state. (See Education Week, Dec. 7, 1983, pp.6-18.)

Partnerships between public schools and colleges have been formed in many areas through the Interactive Research and Development programs, and collaboration among colleges concerned about teacher education has begun. For example, the Consortium for Excellence in Teacher Education (CETE) was founded in 1983 among 15 eastern liberal arts colleges which have undergraduate programs for teacher certification.

Ample evidence indicates that effective educational programs are in motion in many places, federal funding has enabled schools to serve more children better (e.g., bilingual and special education) and that nine-year-

olds are reading better today than they did a decade ago. The positive impact of Project Head Start is being noted as early participants reach high school. Furthermore, research has yielded more knowledge about human development and learning, and there has been an increasing translation of this knowledge into useful school implementation. (See Educational Psychologist, Fall 1983, for full discussion.)

It is important to acknowledge that improvements and efforts were well underway before the 1983 flood of commissioned reports. People working in schools know that change is critical to make the educational system serve students meaningfully. Change is especially urgent because new teachers must be sought (46,000 by 1985 and 303,000 by 1990, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics) and competent teachers retained. High schools face serious dropout rates (only 66.3 percent completed high school in 1980), and many students who graduate leave school without certain basic skills and a spirit for life-long learning.

It is fair to say also that for all of the attempts and efforts to improve schooling, there has rarely been enough money, federal or state or local, to insure that effective change was permanently implemented. And for all the current suggestions and recommendations, not one calls for the allocation of additional funding. Educators know that to turn the tide of mediocrity and to get our schools out of trouble 1) costs money and 2) takes collaborative effort. Ultimately, the tide will be turned by supporting the teachers, not by burdening them.

NEW YORK CITY TEACHERS

According to data provided by New York State Basic Educational Data System for 1982-83, there were 49,237 full-time teachers in New York City of whom 63 percent were female, 37 percent male. As a group, the New York City teachers are highly educated. For more than 8 percent the highest degree held is a B.A., for more than 42 percent a M.A. or its equivalent, and for over 47 percent a M.A. plus 30 hours of additional graduate credit. Over one percent have doctoral degrees. Nearly 79 percent are teaching with permanent teaching licenses and have an average of 13 years of teaching experience.

A profile of 602 first-year teachers in New York City (Sacks, 1984) indicates that new teachers tend to be older (average of 33 and a half years), well educated (for 55 percent the highest degree held is a B.A., for 41 percent a M.A., and for just over 1 percent a Ph.D. degree; 3 percent have special diplomas), and largely female (78 percent). While there are areas such as math and special education where new teachers are in short supply, by-and-large New York City has still been able to attract able teachers. This may be in part because salaries are slightly higher than the national norms: in 1983-84 the starting salary with a B.A. was about $14,500; the median for all New York City teachers in 1982-83 was $26,580. These salaries are better, but not sufficient, when compared to other entry level and long-term salaries in other professions in this area.

A survey of 13,623 teachers in New York State was conducted by the New York Times between May and June 1982. Of the 5,702 teachers who returned their questionnaires, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) said they were "proud to be a teacher today." In New York City slightly more

than half, and more women (70 percent) than men (56 percent), said they were proud. Asking the same question of first-year teachers, 77 percent said they were proud, and 83 percent "planned to return to teaching in September 1983" (Sacks, 1984). The National Education Association reported in its 1981-82 survey that 64 percent of teachers would choose teaching if they had it to do over again. How does this 64 percent career satisfaction level compare with that of other professionals? Rather than an indication of "low morale" as suggested in the national reports, perhaps these percentages represent a high level of professional morale and a sense of mobility for the proportion who would choose another career.

In addition to surveys of teachers about their profession, The New York Alliance for the Public Schools (1983) has published the findings from a January 1983 study of parental attitudes towards the New York City public schools. They found that parents "expressed their belief that public school teachers are better trained, better qualified and more dedicated than other school teachers," and that they want a school for their children with a "well-articulated philosophy of education" (p. 2). In the summer of 1983, the Alliance contacted a randomly-selected sample of New York City residents for a 30 minute phone interview. The six key findings were:

1. Public school parents are pleased with the schools their children attend (66 percent rate them "A" or "B", and 86 percent give these same ratings to the magnet or specialized high schools).

2. The general public has a negative image of the public school system although neighborhood schools rate high marks. Schools with which parents are familiar receive high ratings but these do not translate to the overall system.

3. People who rely on media reports are not as positive about the public schools as people who know them first-hand.

4. Discipline and over-crowded classes are the most serious problem facing the public schools.

5. Public school teachers are well-regarded, but the public is concerned about the difficulty of recruiting good new teachers for the schools, both now and in the future.

6. The public believes the public schools are under-funded and teacher salaries are too low.

This survey, along with others already described, indicates the need for improvement in salaries, funding, class size, and so on. The significance of the support for the school that the parents know first-hand and for the teachers who teach their children cannot be underestimated as a source for collaboration and advocacy. In addition, the role of the media and secondary sources in presenting an image of the school and teachers is salient. Faculties of teacher education programs have long sought a more positive press for the teaching profession. Attracting talented undergraduates to teaching has been hindered by the negative images presented in the media. An important topic for discussion among student teachers and prospective student teachers is how they can convince their parents (78 percent thought teaching a good profession in 1969; 48 percent in 1980, according to the Carnegie Foundation Report), friends, and peers that teaching is a rewarding and noble career choice, the most challenging experience they will ever encounter.

> "No other job in the world could possibly dispossess one so completely as this job of teaching. It cuts right into your being: essentially, it takes over your spirit. It drags it out from where it would hide."
> Sylvia Ashton Warner

CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUING CHANGE

What are the conditions which do attract some to teaching and encourage others to remain? In studies of teacher motivation and job satisfactions, several key factors emerge. Lortie (1975) reported that teachers find satisfaction from the primary goal of "inspiring students to value learning" (p. 105), and Sacks (1984) found an idealism factor among the first-year teachers which included "the desire to contribute to children's learning," a "love of school, learning, and subject matter," "service to young people and society," and "personal experiences with children." Zumwalt of Teachers College found that teacher satisfaction was generated by five factors: students, adults, personal characteristics of the teacher, curriculum, and educational setting. In each case, students are cited as the major source of motivation and satisfaction in teaching.

The words of positive teachers capture the quality:

> "I love children. I enjoy watching them grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally."
>
> "Giving students a feeling of excitement and inspiration with knowledge." And reciprocally, "They introduce me to a whole new world that they are much more sophisticated about, the life of the streets, and they manifest an awful lot of humanism."
>
> "The joy of watching children discover, learn, is what keeps us in the classroom."

In a two-year follow-up study conducted by Drs. Robert L. Kahn and Toni C. Antonucci of the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research and funded in 1978 by the National Institute of Education, 1,202 persons certified to teach in 1979 were surveyed. Of the group, 54 percent were working as teachers, 17 percent as substitutes, and 29 percent in other fields. According to the follow-up, teachers were "happier, more satisfied

with life as a whole, less frustrated and less depressed than non-teachers." Substitute teachers were more satisfied, had greater self-esteem, and were less depressed than non-teachers. This issue is worthy of further study since teachers may be more satisfied with their experiences, though not with salaries, than newspaper headlines, such as "Morale Low, Best Are Bailing Out," would suggest.

Teacher Attitudes

No teacher wants to fail, and every teacher needs support of some kind. Some teacher candidates are not recommended for certification by their colleges, others do not qualify because of needed requirements or certifying examinations. Once certified and in a teaching position, a teacher wants to succeed, to be recognized as a professional, and to achieve her or his full teaching potential in relation to student learning because this is the essential motivating factor for teaching.

The working conditions of teachers have been perceived negatively in most of the 1983 reports. Teachers agree that there is too much paper-pushing, bookkeeping, and routine interruptions. Teaching demands the ability to concentrate on many things at once. Teachers function in the isolation of their classrooms, separated from peers and teaching colleagues. Many teachers consider the latter perceived constraint of isolation as a positive factor for creating their own learning environment. They find that the power to create a learning climate is a challenge and source of satisfaction. This is not to suggest that teachers do not need structures in which they can gain support for problem-solving, sharing techniques and ideas, and attaining suggestions.

Teacher Autonomy

To view creating a classroom learning environment as a positive challenge, teachers must feel some measure of autonomy in making decisions. Autonomy is defined here as self-determination, not meeting the expectations or normative responses of others. A decision is a judgment, making up one's own mind, based on a choice or selection from among options. These are definitions, but it is necessary to examine the decision-making process in order to understand the challenge for teachers. The decision-making process involves identifying a problem, diagnosing it by defining and focusing, seeking information to develop options, qualifying the alternatives, making a decision or a plan, taking action, and finally evaluating the decision on the basis of feedback. (See Hill, Chapter 3.) This means the teacher must be a diagnostician, prescriber, and facilitator, aware of the academic needs of the students, the learning experiences necesssary for groups and individuals, and the techniques for effective teaching.

Teachers must be presented with information about areas in which they have particular concerns -- curriculum, pupil development, classroom management, and learning goals -- in order to facilitate teacher-based decisions.

> "No one is more aware of his or her teaching abilities, personal values, or working conditions than the individual teacher. Teaching as a viable profession is premised on this understanding.... Teachers are decision makers capable of selecting or developing an appropriate classroom plan" Duke, 1984, preface viii.

A teacher's sense of power to make decisions in creating the learning environment for the students contributes to the teacher's well-being and personal growth. Empowered, teachers, not outside reformers, are the

best implementors of change.

The teacher must be aware of being an active decison maker and accept the underlying responsibility for making choices. If the teacher recognizes that she or he is the most significant factor in creating the environment and deciding the process by which students will engage in learning, the teacher acknowledges the extent of her or his power. Since the greatest satisfactions teachers gain are from student progress and mastery, teacher decisions will aim to foster student learning, thereby improving the classrooms and schools.

The suggestion that teachers must exercise greater autonomy in determining the learning needs and the implementation of programs for the students within a classroom does not imply raw power exercised in a void. It does suggest genuine consultation and participation in areas of concern to teachers and students. What are the grade level guidelines for learning? What are the suggested texts? What is the curriculum? What has been tried by other teachers on that grade? How do others solve dilemmas? These questions provide a source for the teacher whose entry into teaching is most frequently based on a desire to help children learn. Greater teacher collaboration and collectivity within the school setting provide teachers with the support necessary for a heightened sense of satisfaction in working with students. Participation in making decisions is the necessary prerequisite for a teacher to feel a sense of autonomy.

The decision-making process is enhanced when teachers see themselves as learners too, when a collegial network operates in the school, when administrators support options and choices, and when there are curriculum

guidelines and clear goals. Teachers must have a place and space to express their positive and negative feelings and frustrations, and the encouragement to seek support and advice from others as part of problem solving. The argument is for creative, not reactive, decision makers. Teachers are revitalized when they try new activities, seek new resources, exercise new skills and techniques. An exciting element of teaching is teacher learning and relearning along with the students.

Teachers make thousands of individual decisions each day, and with such magnitude wide latitude exists even within the boundaries set by the school, by law, and by social and ethical concerns. Most decisions are not irreversible, and one wonderful thing about teaching is that there is almost always another day and another way to try to approach a problem. Since student progress and feedback are crucial, teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of their decisions and make adaptations. But, to make decisions, teachers need to be optimistic and willing to take risks. To experiment and to try something new that may or may not work, teachers need to be autonomous, feel secure, confident, and supported.

Sizer, in Horace's Compromise (1984), summarizes the case for autonomy related to good teaching and supports the needs of teachers for greater control. He argues:

> "The qualities that make for good teaching are generally available qualities -- knowledgeability, energy, clarity, empathy. Given this fact, the teacher lacks the respect-laden autonomy enjoyed by other professions...(They) rarely decide what the basic outlines of their curriculum will be... are rarely trusted with the selection of the texts and teaching materials...are rarely consulted... over the rules and regulations governing the life of their school...Teaching often lacks a sense of ownership, a sense among the teachers working together that the school is theirs, and that its future and their reputation are indistinguishable" (p.13).

And still, by and large, the majority of teachers are dedicated to making life in the classrooms meaningful for their students.

Perhaps the lack of support for teacher decision-making power resides in the structure of the school system itself. The majority of classroom teachers are women (over 80 percent in elementary schools); the vast majority of administrators (over 80 percent in the high schools) and members of boards of education are men. The cultural expectations have traditionally been that teachers will be nurturing, expressive, knowledgeable people, but not active decision makers. Autonomy for teachers implies confidence in the teachers' judgments. This means that women would have the responsibility and support for determining classroom decisions. After a decade of change, the time is ripe.

Teachers and Students

> "I knew the teacher's job is not an easy one, but until one experienced it, one can never ever realize how difficult it really is. It is psychologically, emotionally and physically draining. It is, I believe, one of the hardest professions one can enter. However, it is also one of the most rewarding, and that makes it well worth it. Besides being a teacher, I have discovered throughout the course of a day, a teacher must also be a mother, father, friend, referee, psychologist, storyteller, authority figure, politician, creator, coordinator, housekeeper."

A teacher's well-being is influenced by the students, and teachers often serve as models, counselors, advisors. On the one hand these functions sap the energy of conscientious teachers; on the other hand these roles are a source of psychic rewards. Since students are a primary source of feedback for the teacher, how they behave, do their work, and interpersonally relate are of tremendous importance. In part, this is why student failure affects dramatically the sensitive teacher's perception of her or his success on a daily basis and affects teacher self-esteem in the

long run. Yelling, controlling teachers are frustrated teachers who cannot find the teaching style or techniques to teach and reach students effectively. Individual students can so affect the teacher's perception of her or his effectiveness that it is imperative to help teachers to isolate, identify, and focus their effort on change before the negative reaction permeates the teacher's general attitude about teaching.

Teacher anxiety, headlined in the past few years as burn-out and stress, is often related to student behavior. Beginning and experienced teachers differ in their attributions of causes of anxiety. Beginning teachers want students to like them and worry about their ability to manage the class; experienced teachers are concerned with time demands and difficulties with students, as well as class size and financial constraints (Duke, 1984, p. 143). Sacks (1984) found that first-year teachers in New York City reported very low levels of stress, tension, or absence from school. Although these data are self-reported, one's stated emotional and physical health are measures of perceived well-being. Perhaps teachers and students are being energized by the new national attention to education, and school leadership has begun to reverse the prevalence of anxious attitudes during the 1970's.

During the past decade, the implementation of research findings on how teachers make a difference in classroom management and effective teaching (Brophy, 1982; Good, 1982) has had an impact. Teacher education and in-service programs have sparked the effort at dissemination of new understandings. To increase teacher effectiveness and to decrease anxiousness, Good's work (1983) supports active teaching and a teacher decision-making format which enables students to examine concepts. Good (1982) asserts

the importance of helping teachers "to understand that a degree of failure will be present in any teaching situation...and that student failure calls for reteaching rather than rationalization" (p. 29). Brophy (1982) emphasizes the teacher's role in helping students to understand the process involved in learning and the need for a problem solving approach, rather than short term control measures, demands and threats. Effective teachers accept students and encourage achievement.

Teachers with an understanding of options make decisons appropriate to the students' needs. Sometimes an awareness of the options for effectively dealing with students' needs develops from observing other teachers, sometimes from discussions with colleagues, sometimes from sensitive observers, sometimes from students themselves. Increasing evidence supports encouraging high teacher expectations, teacher structured classrooms, and teacher diversity (Good, 1983). There seems to be little evidence for the effectiveness of pre-packaged, non-teacher involved classrooms. In the complex learning environment of the classroom, there is no one "right way."

Enabling Conditions and Effective Schools

Research by Rutter (1979) and Edmonds (1981) influenced the general climate of thought toward more positive assumptions about teaching and learning. Briefly, their work suggested that effective schools, regardless of the social status of the students within them, had:

1) Strong leadership from the principal who set the tone, instructional strategies, and resources;

2) high expectations for all students;

3) orderly, relatively quiet and pleasant atmospheres; and

4) an emphasis on student acquisition of reading skills with careful and frequent evaluation of student progress.

Rutter (1979) noted that there was a positive impact (better attendance and less delinquency) in schools where teachers planned jointly. Participative involvement was cited. He wrote that "good morale and the routine of people working harmoniously together as part of an efficient system meant that both supervision and support were available to teachers in a way which was absent in less successful schools" (p. 137). To encourage teacher collaboration in the efforts of school planning heightens the teacher's sense of participation in an effective endeavor.

The Dimensions of Effective Schooling as developed by MacKenzie (1983) emphasize further the significant role of teacher autonomy as it contributes to schools that work well. In examining the studies of effective schooling, MacKenzie elaborates core elements in three areas: leadership, efficacy, and efficiency. Among the core elements in leadership, he cites "teacher-directed classroom management and decision making;" in efficacy, teacher "autonomy and flexibility to implement adaptive practices" and "empathy, rapport, and personal interaction with students;" in efficiency, "effective use of instructional time" (p. 8). Growing and compelling evidence identifies those conditions which enable teachers to be active decision makers. The implications are that conditions which work include support and structure for the teacher, high expectations for teacher success in teaching effectively, and encouragement for diversity in learning experiences and techniques for student involvement.

TAKING ACTION

As the society has become complex, so have the schools and the tasks of the individuals in them. There is great diversity, much strength, and many problems. The social fabric has changed in the past quarter century, and the past decade has seen enormous pressure on the schools and the teachers to address many of the concerns of the changing society. The conscience of the schools has been permeated by the issue of equity in curriculum and in experiences for both girls and boys, for the disabled, and for ethnic, minority, and bilingual children. There is increasing concern about student health and truancy as well as achievement. There is pressure to attend to student needs created by single parent families, families with two working parents, and the effects of poor economic conditions. And ironically, there have been decreasing federal and state allocations for education. In fact, the 1984 federal appropriation for education by the Reagan administration was less than that of 1980. Is it possible, even conceivable, for schools to address the learning and social needs of children without budgets for personnel, materials, and professional support?

Is teaching an "imperiled profession"? Sykes (1983) analyzes why teachers have changed: demographics, greater career mobility for women and minorities, low salaries, "a negative stereotype of schools...has seized the public image," and loss of occupational prestige (p. 88). Sykes and others (Goodlad, 1983; Sizer, 1983) suggest that a primary source for attracting talented graduates to teaching would be to improve salaries, public support, and the opportunities for teachers to exercise their own autonomous, professional judgments. Developing teaching autonomy

begins in teacher education programs, continues in school settings, and involves partnerships and collaborations with other teachers, parents, and the students themselves.

The tide for educational reform rises and the tide falls. At this moment, educators must use these times of ferment and public interest to generate support for those reforms which will most surely affect the learning of the 41 million school children in the nation. This paper has argued that it is the teachers who make the difference. The reforms must focus on the opportunities necessary for teachers to feel professional again and to create classroom sanctuaries secure for learning and growth. Such reforms cost money, involve social will, effort, and shared enterprise. Confronting the issues and collaborating on the solutions can lead to improvement.

1. Education needs more money. Across the board, teachers must be paid higher salaries. Entry level salaries must be made compatible with other beginning jobs of comparable complexity and responsibility. In real dollars, the average salary of teachers decreased by more than 14 percent during the 1970's, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Career ladders and incentive pay responsibilities are necessary. Merit pay as a solution seems to be more dysfunctional to the profession in general than it is meritorious. To develop reliable and valid teacher evaluation systems is costly, time-consuming, and potentially divisive. (See Cordes, 1983, for full discussion.) Greater positive gains can be generated from developing master teacher plans, professional development grants and paid in-service leadership.

2. New monies must be generated from all levels of government and

from all sources: business, industry, foundations. Some will be specially designated for math and science teaching, some for special education missions, some for retraining, e.g., education for computers, aesthetics, gifted, disabled, vocations, and so on. For example, the G.E. Foundation has arranged forgivable loans through the Consortium for Excellence in Teacher Education for college students who make a commitment to teach math for three years following graduation. In New York City the Adopt-a-School program has involved the contributions of about 12 businesses to the public schools, and computer companies throughout the country have donated terminals for student use. Many more collaborations must be sought in a shared commitment to education.

3. Colleges and universities must take a more active role in partnerships with the public schools. These partnerships can take many forms: sharing scholarship in various disciplines, making resources such as libraries and laboratories available, using undergraduates as volunteers in schools, opening theatre and music performances, holding joint seminars, developing curriculum with particular focus from common expertise, and arranging exchanges.

The colleges have an opportunity to serve a major function in designing collaborative research efforts with classroom teachers. College researchers, working with school personnel, can play an essential role in helping to investigate what the schools really need and in translating research findings into classroom practice. Researchers have often used the schools as a basis for study without sufficiently reciprocating and fulfilling the vital responsibility for disseminating their findings.

Furthermore, high quality colleges must not abandon their teacher

education programs, and administrators should help faculty to encourage talented students to consider teaching careers. Education programs must incorporate a problem-solving model into the teacher training curriculum and student teaching experiences. Practice for active decision making must be provided and risk-taking supported, even rewarded.

4. Public school leadership must become visible and pervasive. Principals must assume the role of instructional leaders as a primary function. Teachers, especially those with experience, must share their expertise within each school to form a partnership for optimal learning. School leadership must be sensitive to teachers as they struggle to find their own ways to reach and teach students. In-service programs help in exposing young teachers to a variety of techniques and strategies for promoting student learning. More experienced teachers can feel revitalized by meaningful in-service programs. Master teachers have an opportunity to share their ideas and also to receive remuneration.

School leadership must encourage and reward teacher risk-taking and a variety of teaching styles. Opportunities to observe other effective teachers, to be videotaped in one's own classroom, and to spend time at teacher centers must be provided. A variety of approaches to parents can be explored. It is a rare parent who does not want her or his child to learn and do well in school. Too often people in the schools have treated parents as aliens in the educational process, and the impasse has been difficult. Building alliances with parents can foster student learning, and new attitudes and approaches warrant development.

School leadership must support diversity and individuality. Teachers must believe that decision making counts, that student involvement is

expected, and that teacher ideas, opinions, and professional judgments are valued. If such leadership is not present, teachers will "continue to teach what they teach in the manner in which they teach it" as Goodlad has found (1983).

5. A pilot mentor teacher program has been developed. Sixteen retired teachers were hired as mentors for 43 beginning teachers this year. Mentors were trained to serve new teachers in many ways. In the first-year teacher study (Sacks, 1984), 61 percent of the teachers said they would definitely have liked a mentor and 20 percent thought perhaps they would. Mentors have helped with issues of management and ideas for discipline, with schedules and routines, with teaching materials, and with moral support.

Beginning teachers need help with structure when they are first trying to get the school year started and to establish classroom protocols. In analyzing data for 779 teachers who resigned from teaching in New York City between 1981 and 1983, Bernadette Pepin of the Division of Personnel of the Board of Education found that 73 percent left teaching within the first five months. Mentors have been helpful during the early part of the year when the new teacher feels most alone. Additional funding for mentor teachers must be sought. The early evidence suggests enthusiastic support by mentors, new teachers, and principals.

6. Teacher performance and professional standards and competency testing must be examined to ascertain if they achieve improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Can the tests measure the qualities necessary for good teachers? Will standards mean standardization? What are the best criteria to judge cognitive, affective, and pedagogical strength? Who will teach the children?

The nation's greatest risk is in not supporting its teachers and their verve, optimism, drive, and confidence for promoting student learning and human potential. Teachers must be supported for their professional growth and their autonomy. It is society's task and the great challenge for the rest of the century. It must begin now.

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Summary of Seminar Discussion

This paper was the focus of discussion during a November, 1984 seminar sponsored by MEDARP and held at New York University, courtesy of N.Y.U.'s Metro Center. The two-hour seminar was attended by 16 members of the education community, including administrators, practitioners, teacher educators, and researchers. The discussion, which was often enthusiastic, covered many salient issues regarding teachers, their work, and their training.

The central concept discussed throughout the seminar was that of autonomy. The difficulty in defining autonomy, as it specifically relates to the classroom teacher, fueled much debate. What are the opportunities for teacher autonomy and are teachers willing and able to seize them? What are the factors which inhibit teachers autonomy, despite the unique position of working in individual classrooms, "behind closed doors"? There were concerns expressed about learned helplessness among teachers, as well as the tendency among teachers to avoid risk taking. Many participants indicated fear that risk-takers leave teaching because of its limitations. Change within the field is, thus, thwarted.

The distinction was made between autonomy and anarchy. The parameters under which teacher autonomy could be enhanced were explored. Should individual teachers be given greater autonomy or should teachers, as a class, be so empowered? In particular, the role of the principal as a leader was stressed. Resistance to sharing decision-making power with teachers was recognized.

The needs of beginning teachers, as compared to more experienced teachers, also received much attention during the seminar. The relative importance of in-classroom student teaching experience was energetically debated, especially in light of recent hirings of non-licensed teachers by the New York City Board of Education. The need to provide support and nurturance to new teachers was mentioned.

Experienced teachers should be given greater autonomy, decision-making power, and recognition. However, increased responsibility and accountability must accompany these gains. Classroom doors must be opened, both literally and figuratively, to allow increased sharing of ideas and methods among teachers. Yet, even with increased autonomy, many good teachers will leave the classroom. They will leave to expand their skills and change their daily tasks beyond the classroom. There is the need to create a more clearly defined professional ladder for those teachers who wish to test their wings in other positions within the field of education.